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THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE FRUIT INDUSTRY IN QUEBEC.

One of the penalties imposed upon the President of this Society is the preparation of a presidential address for each of the two meetings held during the year. At the meeting at La Trappe in September the subject discussed was "The Economics of Fruit-Growing," where an attempt was made to deal with the factors operating at the present time both in favor of and against fruit-growing as a business proposition in this province. The active interest of the Department in the development of fruit-growing was specially noted and commended, also that of this Society in connection with demonstration orchards, exhibits and dissemination of valuable information.

The commercial orchards of the Island of Montreal, St. Hilaire, Rougemont and Abbotsford are mainly confined to the slopes or terraces left by the "Champlain Sea" at the close of the Glacial Period. By a sinking of the land the ocean invaded the St. Lawrence valley and at the longitude of Montreal the sea extended from the Laurentians north of the river to the Covey Hill in Huntingdon County, a width of over eighty miles. It also extended up the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence for a distance not yet definitely determined. In the re-elevation of the land terraces were left along the margin of this Champlain Sea, and these may be still distinctly traced over long distances. These terraces are largely composed of gravel, thus furnishing ideal orchard land provided with ready natural drainage. They occur on Montreal Island from Beaconsfield east to Bout-de-l'Île. On the sides of Covey Hill and the old volcanic peaks of Beloeil, Rougemont and Yamaska they are plainly discernible. All the way from Missisquoi to Levis there are traces of terraces, and it is probable that good orchards planted on them would be commercially productive.

Below Quebec on the South Shore L'Islet and Kamouraska Counties have for more than 150 years carried on a specialized form of fruit-growing with much profit. There are also many good orchard locations in the hilly districts of the Eastern Townships, but so far as I am aware little effort has been made to set out commercial plantations.

An Unthrifty Industry.

Experts have told us repeatedly that many parts of Quebec, including those already named, are admirably adapted for the growing of hardy fruits, and experience has told us that such is the case. Unfortunately, however, growers were not always careful to plant hardy varieties, and the result has consequently been very disappointing. According to the Census reports of 1911 there were 1,252,835 bearing apple trees in the province, and the estimated crop for 1910 was 1,500,000 bushels, or less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels per tree. This is far from satisfactory when we bear in mind that Mr. Waddell's orchard of 200 trees (4 acres) yielded last year $2\frac{1}{2}$ barrels per tree, and Mr. Martin's orchard (6 acres) at Mont St. Hilaire produced this year 4 barrels per tree.

In spite, however, of all that has been done to foster the orchard industry of Quebec there has been practically no development in recent years. A trip during the summer through the main apple orchard districts revealed a large number of old badly neglected orchards where fungi and insects had full sway and were fast destroying the trees. It may be said without exaggeration that the majority of the orchards are neglected, and that the majority of the owners do not really know what is meant by the terms proper cultivation and care.

I do not wish to pose as a "calamity prophet" but I am of the opinion that if the fruit-growers do not wake up and apply the principles that this Society has been advocating for many years there will soon be but few orchards worthy of the name left. Are all the efforts made for many years by such men as Gibb, Craig, Fisk, Shepherd, Dupuis, Chapais, Blair, Brodie, Jack, Dickson, Reynaud, and others to build up a fruit industry to go for naught?

W. T. Macoun, Dominion Horticulturist, in his recently published bulletin, "The Apple in Canada," says:

"The apple was probably planted in what is now the Province of Quebec as early as in any part of Canada. There are records which show that as long ago as 1663 this fruit was being produced there and doubtless some seeds or trees were planted when the first settlements were made near the beginning of the seventeenth century. While the apple industry has not grown as rapidly in this province as in some other parts of Canada, there are many fairly large orchards, and some new orchards are being planted every year. The capabilities of Quebec for the production of apples of the finest appearance and best quality are very great. It was in this province

that the Fameuse apple is thought to have originated, and this is one of the varieties which grows to perfection here. Like other parts of Canada there are great opportunities in the Province of Quebec for growing apples. In the Ottawa and St. Lawrence river valleys, throughout the eastern townships, and in other parts of the province there are many thousands of acres which will grow apples."

William H. Bunting in his Report of a Special Inquiry into Fruit Growing Conditions in Canada, 1911, says:

The Fameuse.

This section of the Province of Quebec has been noted for many years for the production of large quantities of dessert apples, which reach perfection over a considerable area. This would apply more particularly to the Fameuse, a very valuable apple of Canadian origin which has found a congenial home in many parts of the province. Montreal or Quebec Fameuse have become very popular on account of the beautiful appearance and high quality of the fruit. Many thousands of barrels have been sold in the American markets and exported to foreign lands.

Orchards are Declining.

It is greatly to be regretted, however, that there is grave danger of this distinction being lost unless the horticulturists of the province awake to the gravity of the situation and seek to maintain their prestige. Many of the fine Fameuse orchards, if not already dead, are rapidly passing away and no concerted effort is being made to renew them. Many causes, some of them uncontrollable, but others arising from carelessness and neglect, have contributed to this condition. Public attention should be called to the fact that the production of apples is not increasing in the Province of Quebec to the extent it should, but on the other hand it is feared that the next few years will see a serious decrease unless steps are taken at once to remedy this situation. If hundreds of acres of new orchards of the fine dessert varieties were annually planted in this province a ready market would be found at high prices for all the fruit that could possibly be produced, the value of the farms upon which the orchards were located would be vastly increased, and a supply of fancy fruit would be forthcoming which is at the present time greatly needed.

Remedial Measures.

It is clear that the situation demands more attention than has been given it. It demands, in the language of the physician, tonics, proper exercise and good nursing.

(1) Under the head of tonics may be included agencies that introduce vitality into the fruit industry, and among the most important are an increased number of Demonstration Orchards and Fruit Stations, and greater efforts to instruct the fruit-growers and the farmers generally in fruit culture. I rate very highly the value of instruction and demonstration, for experience has shown that increased production in any line of industry is proportional to the amount of intelligence put into it. The value of Demonstration orchards is no longer doubted, and more of them should be established during the coming year. In connection with these more educational field meetings should be held, and the experts should visit all the orchards in the neighbourhood for the purpose of giving help and advice. This propaganda would require more men and more money for its successful prosecution, but, as I have already said, this form of tonic would be most valuable in putting new life into fruit-growing; and the situation demands the outlay.

(2) Under the head of proper exercise may be included those agencies that make for better practices in fruit-growing; namely improved methods of cultivation and better care of the orchards, better packing of the fruit, more co-operation and better transportation facilities to the markets.

The tonics to which I have already referred would undoubtedly improve these defects; in fact the main object of the tonics would be to improve the common practices of pruning, spraying and cultivation among the fruit-growers. Special attention, however, should be given to the practical aspects of co-operation and marketing for in these two particulars our fruit-growers are very backward.

I should like at this point to impress upon you and the Department the very urgent need for the employment of men trained in the sciences of plant diseases, entomology and the physiology of orchard trees. To me it always seem strange that more use is not made of such men by the Department. The U. S. Department of Agriculture employs during the summer vacation a large number of trained men from the Universities on special problems, and the results have been highly satisfactory. In Canada the Geological Survey employs, during vacation, university lecturers and professors on special problems. This commendable practice might be adopted by the Department of Agriculture of this province with much profit. There are several well trained men in Macdonald College and the Colleges at La Trappe and Ste. Anne de la Pocatiere who are employed in lecturing to classes of students during the fall and winter sessions, but are free during the long summer vacation to undertake research work. These men, I say, should be employed by the Department in the investigation of problems

that are of economic interest to the fruit-growers. The total outlay of money would be insignificant in comparison with the value of the results that would likely be achieved in a few years.

I should like also to impress upon the "powers that be" that an entomologist is not necessarily a plant pathologist, and that when investigations are to be undertaken the two classes of problems demand two kinds of investigators. May we witness before long the inauguration of such a policy as I have outlined?

(3). Under the head of good nursing, may be included those agencies that promote an increased interest in fruit and in its value as an article of consumption. It must be acknowledged that we have been very remiss in the employment of such agencies. Montreal is our chief market, but the citizens of Montreal take very little interest in our fruit. They know more about the fruits from the other provinces and the States, which as a rule are inferior to our main varieties. In these days of active competition we must be prepared to boom our own wares if we are to hold our own markets. The consuming public must be kept informed of the merits of our specialties, and the press should be used for this purpose. Timely articles should appear regularly in the Montreal dailies regarding our fruit industry, the best apples for the home, and even receipes in which apples may be used. In these articles emphasis should be laid upon the fact that Quebec produces the best dessert apples in the world, that the industry is one which should be encouraged, and that Quebec offers a more inviting field for investment in that regard than any other province.

Another method of advertising our own fruit would be to hold an annual exhibition in Montreal. Such an exhibit would not only create an interest in our fruit, but would also inform the consumers where fruit of the best quality can be secured directly from the growers. Other provinces have had their exhibits in Montreal, and have been rewarded by the opening up of a good market where they were able to dispose of many carloads of fruit.

All kinds of advertising cost money, but good advertising alone pays, and we should see to it that it is done well. By whatever means it is done we must look to the Provincial Department of Agriculture for financial help.

This Society has been of considerable service for many years in keeping alive the fruit-growing spirit in this province, and its officers have given freely of their time to the cause. We believe that the time has now arrived when a decided advance should be made through its agency, but more funds

will be required; otherwise the Society will become moribund and exert but little influence on the fruit-growing community. I have indicated some of the agencies that could be set in motion; what are we going to do about it? I believe that we should get together at this meeting and thrash out a policy which we can submit to the Minister for approval. There is room for the activities of both the Pomological Society and the Fruit Division of the Provincial Department, and we ought to utilize both to the fullest extent.

In conclusion, I desire to call attention to the appearance during the year of an interesting pamphlet by our old friend J. M. Fisk of Abbotsford, entitled "Abbotsford—An Historical Sketch with Notes and Events." Over half of the pamphlet is devoted to the history of the development of the fruit industry of the district. The Appendix includes a valuable fruit list. The illustrations are excellent and add much to the value of the publication.

I have just received a copy of a pamphlet by Dr. Chapais which will prove most valuable. It is "Historic Notes on the Schools of Agriculture of the Province of Quebec," and it comprises a great deal of valuable information. Our old friend Mr. Fisk was one of the first to start this work, and I hope others will follow it up, as there is a great deal of information lying loose that should be collated.

